

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 03977 252201Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 MCT-01 SP-02 L-03
TRSE-00 HA-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 FBIE-00 SY-05 JUSE-00
/057 W

-----118468 252208Z /23

O R 252126Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9325
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV SHUM CI
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION

REF: SANTIAGO 3948

1. SUMMARY: LOCAL PRESS CONTINUES THE STRIDENT NATIONALISM REPORTED REFTEL. FOR FIRST TIME, ANTI-U.S. HANDBILLS APPEARED ON THE STREET. A "TERCERA" EDITORIAL TODAY REGARDS THE PROPPER INVESTIGATION IN CHILE TOO BROAD IN SCOPE, FALLING OUTSIDE LEGAL BOUNDARIES. MEANWHILE, THIRD CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE CARMEN CANALES SUBMITTED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS A QUESTIONNAIRE TO FBI AGENTS CORNICK AND SCHERER ON THE TOWNLEY EXPULSION. END SUMMARY

2. GOC-OWNED "EL CRONISTA" MAY 25 CONTINUED THE APPEAL TO NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS, IN THE FACE OF "FOREIGN AGGRESSION". IT PRINTED ACCUSATIONS MADE BY VICTOR MANUEL AVILES, IDENTIFIED AS AN ADVISOR TO THE CHILEAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND AN EXPERT IN WOMEN'S LEGAL PROBLEMS, THAT PROPPER'S ACTIVITIES HERE REPRESENTED "THE OLD FORMULA OF THE STICK" EMPLOYED BY THE U.S. TO INTERVENE INTO CHILEAN

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INTERNAL AFFAIRS. "CRONISTA" ALSO CARRIED A STATEMENT BY A GROUP IDENTIFIED AS NATIONALIST YOUTH OF CHILE CONDEMNING THE PROPPER/FBI PRESENCE AND THE RECENT VISIT BY U.S. AFL-CIO LABOR LEADERS TO CHILE. THE STATEMENT ENDED WITH A DEMAND TO "KEEP HANDS OFF CHILE". (COMMENT: FLYERS, PRESUMABLY DISTRIBUTED BY THE YOUTH GROUP, WERE FOUND OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY TODAY WITH THE SAME DEMAND AND

THE STATEMENT: "WE DEFEND THE DIGNITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE FATHERLAND.").

3. ONLY IDEPENDENT DAILY "LA TERCERA" HAD EDITORIAL COMMENT UNLEASHING A CAUSTIC COMMENTARY ON WHAT IT VIEWED AS FREEWHEELING ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY PROPPER IN CHILE, "TERCERA" ASSERTED THAT CHILEANS ARE TAKEN ABACK BY THE "EXCESSIVE COURTESIES AND ABSOLUTE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT" AFFORDED PROPPER AND THE FBI AGENTS. ARGUED THE DAILY: "IT IS KNOWN THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE HAS THE MOST AMPLE INTENTION OF COLLABORATING IN THE INVESTIGATION, BUT THIS ATTITUDE SHOULD NOT PERMIT ANY ABUSE BY THE INVESTIGATOR (PROPPER) OR HIS AGENTS WHO -- IT IS WORTH RECALLING -- HAVE NO LEAGL STANDING IN OUR COUNTRY". THE ARTICLE DECLARED THAT THE INVESTIGATION PHASE IN CHILE SHOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN TERMINATED -- THAT THE LONGER IT IS DRAGGED OUT, THE MORE AMMUNITION CHILE'S ENEMIES HAVE TO ATTACK THE COUNTRY -- AND THAT THE BOUNDARIES ON THIS TYPE OF INVESTIGATION APPEAR TO HAVE ALRADY BEEN OVER-STEPPED.

4. THIRD CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE CARMEN CANALES TOLD NEWS-MEN MAY 24 THAT SHE HAD REQUESTED -- THROUGH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND U.S. EMBASSY CHANNELS -- THAT FBI AGENTS CARTER CORNICK AND ROBERT SCHERER RESPOND TO QUESTIONS REGARDING THEIR ROLE IN THE TOWNLEY EXPULSION APRIL 8. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHE NOTED THAT ANY RESPONSE BY THE PAIR WOULD BE VOLUNTARY IN VIEW OF THEIR DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND FIXED NO TIME LIMIT FOR THEM TO REPLY TO A QUESTIONNAIRE SHE PROVIDED THE MINISTRY. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS TODAY, THE JUDGE ALSO TURNED DOWN A REQUEST BY TOWNLEY LAWYER MANUAL ACUNA FOR A COURT DECREE FORBIDDING CORNICK AND SCHERER TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY UNTIL THEY DECLARE. MEANWHILE, MOST OF THE PAPERS CARRIED THE EMBASSY'S PRESS STATEMENT ON THE VISIT OF ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY EUGENE PROPPER AND THE TWO FBI AGENTS (PARA 4, REFTEL). LANDAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, PRESS COMMENTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA03977
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780221-0919
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780519/aaaaappr.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 94b0ba96-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SANTIAGO 3948
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2567747
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION
TAGS: PGOV, SHUM, SOPN, CI, (LETELIER, ORLANDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/94b0ba96-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014